और बिहार आबादी के दृष्टिकोण से दो सबसे बड़े राज्य हैं। जो आंकड़े दिए गए हैं उनके अनुसार बिहार में 31 मार्च, 2001 तक 42,149 और उत्तर प्रदेश में 67,313 सौर लालटेनों का वितरण किया जा चुका है और इस वर्ष 2001-2002 में आठ हजार बिहार में, दस हजार उत्तर प्रदेश में और 4500 उत्तरांचल मे वितरण हुआ है। महोदय, दूरदराज के गांवों में जहां बिजली की व्यवस्था नहीं है, उन गांवों के लिए सौर लालटेन बहुत उपयोगी है, इस संबंध में अभी भी लोगों को जानकारी नहीं है। मेरा अनुभव यह है कि अभी भी यह लालटेन गरीबों के बीच में या कम आय वाले लोगों के बीच में नहीं जा रही है। मुझे इसके दो कारण लगते हैं, एक कारण आदरणीय प्रणब मुखर्जी ने बताया कि 1300 रुपए सब्सिडी है। जो कम आमदनी वाले गरीब लोग हैं वे 1300 रुपए की सब्सिडी भी नहीं दे सकते। तीन हजार दाम है अगर इसमें 1300 हटा दिया जाए तो 1700 तब भी रह जाता है। इसलिए मैं सरकार से अनुरोध करना चाहूंगा और जानना भी चाहूंगा कि इस कार्यक्रम को लोकप्रिय बनाने के लिए लोगों को जागृत करने के लिए सरकार के पास कोई कार्यक्रम है ? दूसरी बात यह है कि इसकी सब्सिडी और बढ़ाई जाए ताकि दाम कम लगे और दूरदराज के गांवों में कम आय वाले गरीब लोग भी इसको खरीद सकें। मैं इस संबंध में जानकारी चाहता हूं ?

SHRI M. KANNAPPAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, in addition to the subsidy, the Government gives so many concessions such as reduction in custom duty on key materials, exemption from excise duty, expansion of market leading to the increased production at lower cost. ... *(Interruptions)* ...

प्रो. रामदेव भंडारी : यह सब सवाल के जवाब में लिखा हुआ है। आपने जो जवाब दिया है उसमें यह सब लिखा हुआ है। मेरा सवाल सब्सिडी बढ़ाने से है।

SHRI M. KANNAPPAN : Sir, due to these measures, the price of lantern has been brought down to Rs. 3000 in 2001 from Rs. 5000 in 1993. The concessions are being given by the Government. However, the suggestions given by the hon. Member will be taken into consideration.

Replacement of 'EAS' by 'Food for Work' programme

*524. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO : Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to replace the 'Employment Assurance Scheme' (EAS) by 'Food for Work' programme to ensure that there is no starvation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU) : (a) to (c) Steps are in hand to shortly commence a new scheme, the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, under which those who take employment from Panchayats to build durable rural assets will be paid wages in cash and in foodgrains. The existing employment schemes of the Central Government are to be merged into the Yojana which will provide food security through additional wage employment and the details of which are being worked out.

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO : Sir, the Central Government has reduced the allocation under the Employment Assurance Scheme to Andhra Pradesh from Rs. 167.42 crores in 1998-99 to Rs. 60.8 crores in the year 2000-2001. This has increased the burden on the State Government. I want to know whether the Central Government will increase the allocation and the quantity of commodities *viz* rice and wheat to the State Government to be distributed under the Food for Work Programme.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : Sir, I would like to add here because the Prime Minister has made an announcement on the 15th August that the details are being worked out. The Food for Work Programme as of now will continue up to 30th September and then by that time this scheme will be in operation.

Sir, as far as the Employment Assurance Scheme in general is concerned, we are going to have a Short Duration Discussion this afternoon. I can avail of that opportunity to speak in detail about it. But about the specific question that the hon. Member has put with regard to Andhra Pradesh, earlier these allocations were demand based. Subsequently, we have reviewed the scheme and made certain changes in the scheme. Now, when Andhra Pradesh Government has requested for some assistance from the Centre under the Food for Work Programme, we have released three lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains to the State of Andhra Pradesh. So, they have enough foodgrains on hand and the additional benefit which the hon. Member wanted to know through this scheme is that it is an additionality over and above whatever they were getting under the Employment Assurance Scheme. Under the Food for Work Programme the foodgrains which we are giving to the State of Andhra Pradesh and to other States also, it is an additionality. It is an additional amount which is coming. As far as people are concerned, they will be getting assured employment in the villages because earlier, Sir, in spite of our best efforts under the Employment Assurance Scheme and the other Centrally-sponsored schemes, there was still demand and we were not able to meet that demand. Now, the idea through this new scheme is that wherever there is demand, if anybody wants employment, it

should be assured to him through the new scheme where a certain amount is paid in cash and the remaining is paid in foodgrains. Sir, one point of this programme is the money to match these foodgrains. The States were saying that money is not available with them. We have told the States with regard to the cash component of this wage, that they can utilise the money that is given under any of the Central Government schemes and then they can dovetail both the foodgrains additionality and the cash component within the Central Government schemes keeping in view the financial position of the States.

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO : Sir, my second supplementary is this. While a majority of the people are undernourished, with some even dying of starvation, the Government is sitting on a mountain of foodgrains, part of which has been rotting in godowns. Even under the Food-for-Work Programme, the employment opportunities for the poor are limited and the payment is lopsided. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, what steps are being taken by the Ministry in this regard to help the poor people in this country.

Part (b) of my supplementary is : Except in Andhra Pradesh, the Public Distribution System is not running well in other parts of the country. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps the Government have taken for proper distribution of foodgrains, under the Food-for-Work Programme.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : Sir, as far as the Public Distribution System is concerned, I think, the hon. Member's remark is general. I am afraid, it is not a factual position. There are other States which are equally and effectively implementing the Public Distribution System, and Andhra Pradesh is one among them. I do agree with it, but there are also other States.

Secondly, with regard to another observation which he has made--quite often, we see in some newspapers that the Government is sitting on a mountain of foodgrains and that there are starvation deaths—I would like to submit that, from time to time, we have been communicating to the States that there is no dearth of foodgrains. We have been suggesting to them to come out with a district-wise action plan and send it to us, and that the Centre is willing to give any amount of foodgrains. This has been the general policy which has been explained in this House by my colleague, Shri Shanta Kumar. Sir, as you know, we are in a system where the foodgrains will be made available by the Centre, and the States have to utilise them in a proper manner, with the available network within the district and also at the Panchayati-level. So, keeping all these things

in mind, I have the figures with me showing how much foodgrains have been released under the Food-for-Work Programme. Initially, we thought of giving foodgrains wherever there are natural calamities. But, subsequently, we have added that these can be even used for other purposes such as for creating employment opportunities. So far, the total foodgrains allotted is 23,22,745 tonnes, the foodgrains lifted by the States is 14,48,905 tonnes, and the foodgrains distributed, as per the information I have till yesterday, is 7,21,294 tonnes. Sir, with this figure, one can understand, the allocation is more than 23 lakh tonnes, the offtake is more than 14 lakh tonnes, but the distribution is just 7,21,294 tonnes. There may be some practical difficulties. I do not want to blame anybody. But the fact of the matter is, the foodgrains are being made available to the States, and the States, for reasons best known to them, are not able to lift them and facing the criticism of starvation deaths that are taking place. Even this morning, I had seen in the newspapers a news item, saying that there was a starvation death in a particular district. Immediately, I sent a message to the Government of Orissa. I have told them that you have enough foodgrains with you, you have not utilised them fully. If you need more, you please ask us for additional foodgrains and strengthen the Public Distribution System. This is the line we have taken, and the Government, from time to time, is making it very clear that there is no dearth of foodgrains. With regard to allocation, I have the State-wise allocation with me, but I will be taking the time of the House. If the House so desires, I can give the Statewise allocation.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Narendra Mohan ... *(Interruptions)* ...

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL : Sir, in Kashipur ... *(Interruptions)* ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have called Mr. Narendra Mohan .. *(Interruptions)*

श्री टी. एन. चतुर्वेदी : सिब्बल साहब, आप नरेन्द्र मोहन नहीं हैं। ... (*व्यवधान*) उन्होंने नरेन्द्र मोहन जी को बुलाया है। ... (*व्यवधान*)

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE : Sir, people are dying ... *(Interruptions)* .... We are seeing it on television ... *(Interruptions)* ... The figures are there. But the people are dying. It is a question of the credibility of the Minister ... *(Interruptions)* ... Can't we help them ? ... *(Interruptions)* ... Let there be any Government in power ... *(Interruptions)* ...

श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन : सभापति महोदय, आपने मुझे समय दिया है ... (**व्यवधान**) 12 बजने वाले हैं .:. (*व्यवधान*) ।

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE : It is not my Government ... (*Interruptions*) ... It is not his Government ... (*Interruptions*) ... People are dying ... (*Interruptions*)... Hon. Members are raising this issue repeatedly ... (*Interruptions*) ... What is your reply ? ... (*Interruptions*) ...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU : In fact, even before the Hon. Members expressed this concern, I, myself as a Minister, had expressed this concern... (*Interruptions*)... You please note that I have not blamed any Government ... (*Interruptions*)... I have not blamed any Government ... (*Interruptions*)... I have not blamed any Government ... (*Interruptions*)... We, as a Parliament ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE : I am not blaming any one ... (*Interruptions*)... As politicians, are we not answerable to the people ? (*Interruptions*)... What is your reaction ? ... (*Interruptions*) ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Package for Economic Development of NER

*525. SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA :
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 3750 given in the Rajya Sabha on 19th April, 2001 and state the progress made in the implementation of each of the 28 items included in the agenda for Socio-Economic Development of North-Eastern States and Sikkim announced by the Prime Minister on 22nd January, 2000, at Shillong ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Present status of items covered under Agenda for Socio-Economic Development of North Eastern States and Sikkim

The present status of 28 items covered under Agenda for Socio- Economic Development of North Eastern States and Sikkim is tabulated below :—

S.No.	Item	Status
1	2	3
1.	Provision of Rs. 500 crore for Rural Infrastructure	Schemes for Rs. 877.13 crore were sanctioned till 31-3-2001 and amount